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April 9, 2026

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Rain, rain and more rain: Saturday, April 4, brings rain, rain, and more rain

Standing water is shown on Sunday, April 5, near LTW Ergonomic Solutions, Lawrence, located on South Paw Paw Street, following Saturday's daylong rain. Nearby, a grassy area south of the Lawrence Post Office was underwater on Sunday as Saturday's rainstorm played havoc with low lying areas. The Lawrence Downs apartments also experienced a small pond of water due to the heavy amount of rain experienced that day.
Courier-Leader photos/Paul Garrod

The bridge at the North Branch of the Paw Paw River, Lawrence, is shown Saturday, as rainwater from the river rises during the day long deluge. The river continued to rise during the day, nearly reaching two park benches nearby.
Photos courtesy/ John Garrod

AREA STUDENTS TO DISPLAY ART

SOUTH HAVEN - Perspective: Middle and High School Art Exhibition will celebrate with an opening reception at the South Haven Center for the Arts on Friday, April 10, from 5 to 7 p.m. Artists, teachers, family, friends, and community members all invited to celebrate the success of these students' artists. The artwork, including sculpture, ceramics, drawing, painting, collage, fiber arts, and digital art, will be judged, and winners will be announced at the reception.

The work of middle school and high school students (grades sixth through 12th) will be exhibited at the Center for the Arts, 600 Phoenix St. South Haven, from April 4 through May 2. This exhibition is made possible due to the work of art teachers Colleen Anastacio at Baseline Middle School, Madeline Finn teaching in South Haven High School, Kelsey Vollrath at Covert Public Schools, Jennifer Nesbitt and Angela Rueff at Bangor Public Schools, Julie Stegman at St. Paul Lutheran School, Sarah Bentley at Paw Paw High School, Tamara Schoonbeck at Decatur Schools, Kelly Vander Kley and Tracy Wendt at Van Buren Tech.

"This is a great opportunity for the students to showcase their talent. This is my favorite show, actually!" said South Haven Center for the Art's Board President Genie Crotte. These student exhibitions have been a key program of the Center's mission for over 30 years.

High school student artwork will be exhibited from South Haven, Covert, and Bangor High Schools and Van Buren Tech Center. Middle School artists' work will be exhibited from St. Paul's, South Haven, Baseline, Bangor, and Covert Middle Schools. Additionally, Paw Paw High School and Decatur Schools will join the exhibition for the first time. Area homeschooled students also are participating in the exhibition. The Center for the Arts will have drop-in activities during the run of the exhibition for families including Van Buren Youth Initiative Classes for Middle and High school aged artists, with more details posted on the events calendar at: southhavenart.org

Perspective is sponsored by South Haven Public Schools and made possible in part through funding from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council and Edward Jones Office of Paul Hix.

The South Haven Center for the Arts is free and open to the public.

"Dog"
By Nino Camus,Paw Paw High School

"Our Self- Portrait"
By Trinity Sistruck, South Haven High School

Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Thursday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information visit: southhavenarts.org or southhavenarts on Facebook and instagram. To contact the Center directly, email: info@southhavenarts.org or call (269) 637-1041.

"Sweet Deception"
By Lexi Shugg, Van Buren Tech

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Lawrence Township holds special meeting on contract dispute between Van Buren District Library and the District Library Lawrence Branch

LAWRENCE - A special Lawrence Township Board meeting was held Thursday, April 2, at the Lawrence Township Hall to receive public input on a contract dispute between the Van Buren District Library, Decatur, and the District Library Lawrence Branch.

More than 100 people attended the more than two-hour meeting, where comments from the public, township board officials, the township's district library board member, the Lawrence library branch head librarian, and others were heard.

At issue is Lawrence Township's efforts to update a longstanding, open-ended agreement to require guaranteed financial contributions from a now well-funded district library for building maintenance, a proposal the Van Buren District Library (VBDL) board has to date, not moved forward, leading to a negotiation impasse and a 180-day contract termination notice from Lawrence Township.

Lawrence Township Board member Tom Reynnells chaired the meeting due to the absence of Lawrence Township Supervisor Donna Spenner.

Reynnells said Lawrence Township has requested three "face to face meetings" with the District Library Board. "These requests have been denied," said Reynnells.

According to a public information summary, which was provided to attendees, under a long-standing agreement originally based on a 1981 contract and updated in 1999, VBDL provides staff, books and materials library operations and utilities (gas, water, etc.)

Lawrence Township and previously the Village of Lawrence provides the building, all maintenance and repairs, lawn care, building systems (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, etc., and parking areas, including repairs and snow removal).

The arrangement allowed the library to operate rent free since 1981, while Lawrence Township remained responsible for all building-related costs and capital maintenance.

The public information summary stated that at the time of the agreement, VBDL did not have the funding that it currently has today, and it was located within the basement of the old Lawrence Town Hall.

The VBDL operates seven branches across Van Buren County and generates approximately $2.8 million annually through millages. VBDL reported $3,832,386 in total revenues and $2,811 687, in total expenditures, leaving approximately just over $1 million remaining after expenses.

The public information summary further stated the VBDL currently holds approximately $3,688,457 in cash and investment accounts, approximately $1,817,074 in unassigned fund balance (over 50 percent of annual expenditures), approximately $704,000 committed to capital improvements, and an additional endowment fund of approximately $233,575.

The public information summary stated that at the same time, Lawrence Township residents continue to pay a library mill totaling 1.4831 mills, which is broken down as follows:

0.8847 mills (permanent millage – no expiration)
0.4000 mills (approved May 2024 -expires December 2034)
0.1984 mills approved November 2025 – expires December 2035
$211,083 collected in 2025 from Lawrence Township residents
$261,931.69 projected in 2026, reflecting an increase in total tax revenue generated from the same millage rate from Lawrence Township residents.

In 2025, the Lawrence Branch Library's boiler system failed. Lawrence Township requested that the VBDL share the cost of a $25,000 repair, asking the Library to cover approximately half ($12,000); however, the request was declined, with the Library citing the existing agreement. Lawrence Township then purchased temporary heaters and used its own funds to maintain the building, which is VBDL's third-busiest branch.

District Library officials clarified that the millage paid by Lawrence residents (1.4831 mills) goes into the general VBDL fund, not specifically to the Lawrence branch, and that past maintenance contributions from the district were halted years ago due to concerns over their structure.

At issue is updating the outdated, open-ended 1999 contract. Following the boiler system failed, both parties exchanged proposals for an addendum, revealing fundamental disagreements. Lawrence Township officials are seeking a fair, consistent cost-sharing arrangement with guaranteed contributions, updated language reflecting current finances, and a three-year review period. Township officials emphasized that the issue is not the Township's ability to fund repairs, but the need for a fair and enforceable agreement moving forward.

Lawrence Township's proposal required an initial $15,000 contribution - representing unpaid amounts from a prior verbal cost-sharing arrangement that had been discontinued - followed by $7,500 annually thereafter. These contributions had previously been made by the District Library but were later discontinued without a contractual requirement, raising concerns about future reliability. The use of the word "shall" was intended to make these payments a contractual obligation.

In contrast, the VBDL's revised addendum proposed a contribution of "up to" $25,000 in 2026 and "up to" $7,500 annually thereafter but used the word "may." This language makes all payments discretionary, dependent on available funds, and explicitly states that non-payment would not be a breach of contract. Township officials expressed concern that discretionary language could allow payments to be reduced or discontinued in the future without recourse, as had occurred in the past.

Lawrence Township officials also noted that the proposed $25,000 contribution for 2026 reflects, in part, outstanding amounts related to prior obligations, rather than a newly established ongoing funding commitment.

The deadlock between the two entities had led the township to invoke the contract's 180-day termination notice to compel negotiation.

The Lawrence Township Board's primary points remain the "may versus shall" wording and the lack of a fixed contract term, which they see as essential for future accountability and financial security.

During public comments, two distinct perspectives emerged. Some residents encouraged the Lawrence Township Board to sign VBDL's proposed addendum, expressing concern that the risk of the library closing at the end of the 180-day period was too great. Others, while supportive of keeping the library open, urged the Board to secure enforceable, legally binding terms before signing, citing concerns about long-term accountability and the risk of future non-payment.

The Lawrence Township Board emphasized its responsibility to secure a legally binding agreement that protects future boards, ensures accountability, and prevents recurrence of past situations where contributions were discontinued.

Antwerp and Lawrence townships seek updated agreement with district library board

DECATUR - At the Van Buren District Library Board's monthly meeting, March 24, Antwerp and Lawrence Township officials again presented their township's position on the 1997 agreement to the district board members.

Antwerp Township Supervisor Daniel Ruzick addressed the board saying, "I want to take a moment to clearly reaffirm Antwerp Township's position. Under the terms of the 1997 Agreement, either party may terminate the agreement with 180 days' written notice. In December of 2025, Antwerp Township provided that required notice. As a result, June 14, 2026, is the contractual 180-day deadline established by the agreement - not a date arbitrarily set by the Township."

He continued, "I also want to be very clear on one important point: It is not the intention of the Antwerp Township Board to remove the Van Buren District Library from the facility on June 15, 2026. Rather, this date reflects the contractual timeline and establishes the expectation that a new agreement be brought forward to the Antwerp Township Board in a timely and responsible manner.

"Our position remains consistent and straightforward: First, any new agreement must address the financial burden placed on Antwerp Township. Under the existing structure, the township is responsible for significant maintenance and capital costs associated with the largest library facility. This is not equitable, particularly when compared to other municipalities.

"Second, the proposed addendum does not resolve this imbalance. The 1997 agreement does not allocate costs based on square footage, which is precisely why Antwerp Township introduced that concept in its proposed new contract - to create a more equitable and measurable distribution of costs. By sending the township another addendum to the 1997 agreement, the library's proposal fails to adequately address the underlying inequities and does not result in a fair allocation of financial responsibility among participating municipalities.

"Third, as confirmed in the legal opinion dated Feb. 19, 2026, the current Branch Agreements do not obligate VBDL to pay building or maintenance costs beyond utilities and janitorial services. This reinforces the need for a newly negotiated agreement rather than an addendum to an outdated structure.

"Additionally, that same legal opinion makes clear that municipalities may enter into different contractual arrangements, meaning there is no requirement that all branches operate under identical terms.

"Finally, while the 1997 agreement has served its purpose, it no longer reflects today's financial environment or the realities of maintaining modern public facilities. A new agreement must recognize current costs, responsibilities, and fairness across all parties.

"Antwerp Township remains committed to working collaboratively with the library to reach a solution. However, that solution must be sustainable, equitable, and reflective of the true cost of maintaining the facility that serves the public. We have worked diligently to provide the library with a proposed new contract for review. That proposal was rejected at your Feb. 24, 2026, meeting. We then incorporated much of the discussion and consensus expressed during that meeting, and on March 11, 2026, provided a revised proposed contract that addressed your stated concerns and included multiple options for consideration.

He concluded, "This is an unfortunate situation, and the township finds itself in largely uncharted waters. If a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be reached, the township will consult with legal counsel to determine what steps may be necessary to move forward and encourage the library to enter into a new agreement.

"We look forward to receiving a proposal that meets these principles before the June 14 deadline," said Ruzick.

Lawrence Township Supervisor Donna Spenner once again spoke before the Van Buren District Library board at the March 24 meeting held at the Webster Memorial Library in Decatur.

Supervisor Spenner, as well as Antwerp Township Supervisor Daniel Ruzick are seeking to open talks with the Van Buren District Library Board (VBDL) regarding a contract.

"I am here again tonight to request a meeting of the VBDL board and the Lawrence township board, to discuss the agreement between the two parties. I will notify you that at Lawrnce Township's board meeting held Thursday, March 19, it was voted to send a letter of notice of the 180 days to vacate as written and agreed to in our contract. We, as a board of Lawrence Township, have tried to negotiate in good faith to come to an agreement for the future of the VBDL in Lawrence Township. We sent you, as the board, a proposed agreement to help sustain the relationship with no counter response. I, as a taxpayer and those who attended the last meeting who were tax paying citizens of Lawrence Township are disappointed with the direction the VBDL board chooses to go. The taxpayers faithfully voted to pass the millages that you put before them and in return you choose to ignore their request to negotiate a fair and equitable contract with the Lawrence Township Board. This decision did not go easy for the board members; we had long discussion and, in the end, we know it is the right direction."

She continued, "Our township cannot continue to maintain at full cost the maintenance of the building the VBDL occupies for free. It is not fair to our taxpayers to not only to pay a hefty tax levy for the library, but now we ask them to pay for the cost of maintenance from their property tax of the general fund. When I look at the data of revenue vs what the township is asking from the VBDL it is appalling to me that they avoid even looking at the numbers. Example: in 2026 the VBDL will have a revenue of $282,577 from just the taxpayers of Lawrence Township. Lawrence Township is asking for a fee of $7,500 a year which is 2.6 percent of your revenue. The takeaway is this: The average small business will spend 6 to 10 percent of their revenue on rent of facilities. We are asking for a measly 2.6 percent. You as a representative of those who voted for the tax millages to provide service in our township owe it to them to at least come to the table with the township and have conversation. I look forward to receiving a response from this board as to setting a date to meet or accept the fact that now you have two libraries that will cease to exist. I implore that each of you soul search and not look at the end of the table for guidance."

Lawrence Township clerk responds to Lawrence branch library agreement with district library board

Lawrence Township Clerk Tracie Rindfield made the following statement before the Van Buren District Library Board meeting held March 24.

"When I started looking into this, I was reviewing it as the clerk during contract renewal. But as I got into the financials, I found myself stepping back and looking at it as a taxpayer.

"The (District) Library is bringing in roughly $2.8 to $3.1 million per year in revenue. After expenses, it continues to carry a fund balance of around $2.0 to $2.7 million, with over $2.2 million of that being unrestricted and available.

"That means the library is holding more than a full year of operating expenses in reserve.

"At the same time, the current millage will continue to generate roughly $3 million per year for approximately another nine years – that's close to $27 million still to be collected.

"So, this is a financially stable system. It's operating within its means, maintaining significant reserves, and continuing to receive consistent tax revenue.

"At the same time, the building here in Lawrence is a Township-owned asset. That means our taxpayers are responsible for the long-term costs-repairs, maintenance, and the wear that comes with continued use.

"And this isn't just a Lawrence-only facility. The library has acknowledged that residents from across the district use this location. So, the impact on this building-our building – is coming from well beyond just our Township.

"So, when I put that all together, this is what it looks like to me:

"Our residents are contributing to a system that brings in over $3 million a year, holds more than a year's worth of operating expenses in reserve, will continue collecting roughly $27 million more in tax revenue, and at the same time our township is carrying the long-term responsibility for a building that supports that system and is used district-wide."

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2ND FRONT PAGE

Jeremy Macon, former girls basketball coach at LHS, not charged; Cordes confirms

By Elizabeth Ferszt
Contributing Writer

Jeremy Macon, (age 46), the former girls basketball coach at Lawton High School, has not been charged by Lawton Village Police nor Van Buren Co. Prosecutor.

Macon served from fall 2021 to Jan. 2026 as the coach. He resigned as a result of alleged inappropriate conduct with a player on his team who was 18-years-old.

The investigation was initiated by an unnamed tip that the coach had allowed players to use his credit card for unseemly purchases while the team was traveling out-of-state for games.

The allegations and investigation concluded that there were a series of text messages between Macon and the 18-year-old player that involved him sending her "a drawn picture of a penis in the [condensation of a car window]." As well as giving her an Apple Watch and a curling iron.

Macon stated, "I guess in my mind, as long as I loved her and showed her a better life, [but] it went too far in regards to that," Macon expressed to Lawton school officials.

Lawton Village Police records state that, "On many mornings, Macon would text the player and tell (them) he loved (them)," the police record states. "After reading these messages, it was clear that the conversation between them was very inappropriate as far as student/coach relationship" but "it did not rise to the level of criminal behavior."

Lawton Police Chief Greg Cordes stated in a phone interview on April 5 that he was contacted by two different parents regarding the allegations, and that Lawton High School was already conducting interviews with players on the basketball team. The parents said they assumed that law enforcement was already involved. Cordes said that's when he "injected himself into the investigation," and began a "parallel investigation."

However, he found that while what took place was "massively inappropriate, it was not criminal." For example, if Macon had drawn the penis on the car window or sent nude images of himself to a player who was 16-17 years-old, "that would be child pornography," said Cordes.

When asked if anything Macon might have done rose to the level of CSC-4 (Criminal Sexual Conduct 4th degree — touching with the intention of gratification), Cordes said no. He has been in contact with Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office, and they said that there was nothing to charge.

But there is still the possible issue of "grooming" in that Macon may have been "using his position of authority" (teacher or coach/student). But as the alleged victim was already 18-years-old, Michigan laws do not protect her unless it was unwanted attention, or if there was "an accousting" so as to solicit, said Cordes. He added that the school district employs about 170 workers in the area, and that "unfortunately, this has not been the first incident."

As far as barring or preventing Macon from seeking further employment in other public school districts, Cordes said that because Macon was not (is not) a certified teacher (just a paraprofessional and a coach), he is not liable to the same scrutiny that a certified teacher would be, so background checks (I-CHAT) and other vetting would typically not be done. "Unless he (Macon) had charges, and was fingerprinted" there would not be a record, said Cordes.

Cordes also stated that he has not ever talked to Macon formally, ("I don't need to"), nor does he know if Macon is still living in the Lawton area.

It remains to be seen if the Lawton School Board may further sanction or in any way impact this incident. Or if there may be any civil suit.

In the meantime, Macon was hired as Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) women's basketball coach on Feb. 11, but this offer has since been rescinded based on reporting from M-Live, as of March 10.

The Courier Leader has attempted to contact Lawton High School Athletic Director (AD) Chris Richter, but has not responded at press time.

SHAWSA to participate in Coastal Resilience Study

By James Windell

The South Haven Area Water Sewer Authority (SHAWSA) has been invited to participate in the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) ongoing Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study.

The invitation came from Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). EGLE specifically requested SHAWSA's participation related to the Water Filtration Plant, noting that SHAWSA's experience during the highwater levels of 2020 and low water levels of 2013 would provide valuable input to the study.

When the invitation was presented to the SHAWSA Board by Public Works Director Dana Burd at the meeting of March 31, 2026, Burd told the Board that SHAWSA's participation would focus on a risk assessment of the Water Filtration Plant. Staff would participate in virtual meetings in April and May to discuss vulnerabilities and potential impacts from extreme lake level scenarios. Findings from the study would be summarized and later shared with SHAWSA for review prior to publication.

During the meeting, the Board also learned that the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study (GLCRS) is a multi-year, multi-state effort evaluating coastal vulnerabilities to storms, flooding, erosion, and fluctuating lake levels, and identifying strategies to improve resiliency across the Great Lakes region.

According to the USACE website, the GLCRS is an estimated 6 year and $14.4 million cost-shared study with the Great Lakes States: Illinois, Indiana, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

After the Board agreed to participate in the study, Burd said that he thought the community would be interested in the planned study and that he was working on a press release.

SHAWSA indeed did send out a press release on April 3, 2026, announcing the Board's decision. The release also stated that SHAWSA's participation builds upon ongoing local resiliency efforts. SHAWSA is nearing completion of improvements at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, supported by a $1.5 million grant from the State of Michigan's High Water Infrastructure Grant Program.

"South Haven's connection to Lake Michigan is central to the community's economy, recreation, and critical infrastructure," said Dana Burd in the release. "Participating in this study ensures our local experience is reflected in regional planning and helps us prepare for future lake level variability."

The final study report is anticipated in 2028 and will inform coastal resiliency planning and infrastructure investment decisions at the federal, state, and local levels. For more information about the study, visit: https://www.lrd.usace.army.mil/glcrs/

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Paw Paw's Easter Egg Hunt scheduled for April 4, cancels on April 3 due to prediction of rainy Saturday

The Paw Paw Community Easter Egg Hunt was canceled last Friday, April 3, due to standing water and rain, in anticipation of Saturday's Easter Egg Hunt day forecast that called for rain for the day. In the photo taken on Friday, April 3, standing water and rain throughout the day forced the early cancellation. The event was sponsored by RedArrow Ministries.
Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

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Keeley files for Van Buren County District Court Judge

GOBLES - Van Buren County Assistant Prosecutor Rachel Keeley on Monday, March 30, filed her nominating petitions to serve as the next 7th District Court Judge, submitting the maximum 800 signatures allowed for the race and clearing a major milestone in her campaign.

"The support we've received across Van Buren County has been incredible, and it reinforces why I'm running: to bring the courtroom experience our community needs to the District Court bench, particularly in criminal cases where accountability and public safety are on the line," Keeley said.

Keeley brings more than a decade of courtroom experience as a prosecutor, having handled some of southwest Michigan's most serious cases, including child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence. A Van Buren County native, she serves as an Assistant Prosecutor in the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office and previously served in the Allegan County Prosecutor's Office. She has been a Safe Harbor team member since 2015, advocating for victims across both Allegan and Van Buren counties, and serves in Family Reunification Court, a program that helps families heal and rebuild after cases of neglect and abuse.

Her candidacy has earned endorsements from Judge Michael McKay, Judge Susan Metzger, Prosecuting Attorney Susan Zuiderveen and Sheriff Dan Abbott.

Keeley has said she looks forward to bringing her extensive criminal law background to the District Court, where she believes experienced prosecution of serious cases is essential to public safety in Van Buren County.

Keeley is a graduate of Gobles Public Schools, DePaul University and Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

South Haven's Business Hub posts record numbers — and Is just getting started

By Art Nicholas | South Haven Beacon

There's a quiet revolution happening for small businesses in South Haven and Van Buren County — and the numbers in the South Haven Regional Business Hub's newly released 2025 Impact Report make the case compellingly.

Since its founding in 2023, the hub has supported 89 businesses, with 82 currently active. Those businesses together account for 328 jobs created or retained, $28.7 million in small business revenue, $14.76 million in annual payroll, and $56,000 in grants awarded to clients. The organization has achieved a 254 percent growth rate in businesses served and — most strikingly — a 92 percent business retention rate, nearly double the national average of around 50 percent.

"Businesses rarely fail for lack of ideas," writes Executive Director Elizabeth Bernhard in the report. "They fail when entrepreneurs lack the knowledge, skills, and strategic guidance needed to execute effectively." Bernhard joined the hub in July 2025 — becoming its first-ever full-time employee — after years as a strategic partner while leading the Manufacturing Growth Alliance. A Southwest Michigan native and South Haven resident since 2019, she was recruited by board chair and founder Debi Howe when Howe was ready to step back from day-to-day operations.

"When this opportunity came up, it was just the right place and the right time," Bernhard said. "It's been very refreshing to work in my community with the partners I know best."

Community is at the heart of the hub's model — and one of South Haven's most distinctive assets is the depth of talented, engaged retirees who want to give back. In 2025, volunteers contributed 2,762 hours of direct support to hub clients. Volunteer mentors are paired with business owners based on expertise and industry, while a separate pool of subject matter experts — CPAs, bookkeepers, marketing professionals — steps in for specific technical needs. The hub's board of directors and mentor roster reads like a who's who of regional business expertise, from retired banking and manufacturing executives to AI strategists and succession planning specialists.

It's a model born of a real and often invisible problem Bernhard hears from entrepreneurs constantly. "I once had

an entrepreneur say to me, 'Elizabeth, I can't talk to my team about my fears because I'll freak them out. I can't talk to my wife because she's sick of hearing about the business. And my therapist is great, but she doesn't know business,'" she recalled. "Every entrepreneur, regardless of industry, size, or location, has that fundamental need to be in community with peers."

The 2025 Impact Report profiles two compelling local success stories. Max Gleiss launched Max Transportation and Car Service after completing the hub's Startup Series, attending every session and building the licensing, insurance, and market positioning foundation for his business. In just one year, his company logged more than 50,000 miles and became a go-to transportation provider for South Haven events including the Icebreaker Festival, winery tours, weddings, and corporate contracts. "The Business Hub's knowledge, guidance, and support made a real difference in helping my business reach where it is today," Gleiss said.

Lisa Miller of Forever Clean Soap Works — a handcrafted, non-toxic soap and personal care business based in St. Joseph — completed the 2025 Growth Series and used her hub grant, funded by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, to overhaul her website and launch professional email marketing. She is now training her first apprentice and expanding into new markets. Her advice to fellow entrepreneurs: "Being too cautious and conservative can be a detriment to your business. Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith in order to advance."

In 2025, the hub served 69 entrepreneurs through the Startup Series and seven growth-stage businesses through the intensive 26-week Growth Series. A new offering, the Strong Leader Series, launched in December with 16 South Haven area business leaders — and achieved a perfect record: every participant met their primary goal for attending, and 100 percent said they would recommend it to others. The series returns in October 2026.

The hub also completed a Succession Planning Series, addressing a critical and often overlooked need: baby boomer business owners approaching retirement without a transition plan. A final free session is scheduled for April 22 at Lake Michigan College in South Haven.

For 2026, the hub is also launching the Founders Circle — an invitation-only alumni network for Growth Series graduates — while beginning work toward a Lakeshore Capital Consortium: a network of financial institutions designed to help small businesses navigate funding from credit repair to alternative lending. That initiative is slated for 2027.

The hub's 2025 finances reflect a lean, mission-focused operation: $174,075 in total revenue against $154,697 in expenses, with a net surplus of $19,378. Sixty-three percent of expenses went directly into programming. The hub is working to diversify beyond its current grant-heavy revenue mix (75 percent of 2025 revenue came from state grants) through individual giving — nearly $37,000 was raised from donors last year, a record, with a goal to triple that in 2026 through a campaign called Friends of the Hub.

However, the end of 2025 brought a serious challenge: more than $100,000 in Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity grant funding was placed at risk due to state budget cuts. The hub worked with local legislators to advocate for restoration of those funds — a reminder of how dependent small business support infrastructure can be on state priorities.

For South Haven and Van Buren County entrepreneurs, the message is simple: you don't have to go it alone. Growth Series applications are open now through May 13 6PM; the cohort begins June 10, and The Pitch — the hub's flagship public showcase — is set for December 2 at Lake Michigan College. To learn more, visit southhavenregionalbusinesshub.org or contact Elizabeth Bernhard at elizabeth@southhavenregionalbusinesshub.org or 269-720-1699.

Lohrstorfer talks about trip to Antarctica

Martha Lohrstorfer

By James Windell

When Martha Lohrstorfer talks about a trip she took, it's likely to be about a part of the world you haven't visited.

In fact, the title of her talk at the Scott Club on April 21, 2026, is "Journey to the End of the World: The Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and Antarctica."

"This will be a fantastic educational opportunity to learn about a part of the world you may not have visited," says Anna Krajecki, Program Chair of South Haven's Scott Club.

The trip Martha and her husband John took to Antarctica is fascinating because it truly is a journey to the end of the world offering an experience you simply can't replicate anywhere else on Earth. Unlike a trip to a major city in the U.S. or Europe, a trip to Antarctica combines extreme remoteness, surreal landscapes, abundant wildlife, and the feeling of stepping into a world that's barely been touched by humans. There are no cities, no trees – just a place of vast ice sheets, towering glaciers, and sculptural icebergs, and plenty of wildlife.

Lohrstorfer's presentation will take the audience on a visual tour not only of Antarctica, but also of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. The Falkland Islands are a remote South Atlantic archipelago with a blend of rugged beauty, rich wildlife, and a complex history. Eight hundred miles east of the Falklands is South Georgia, a long, mountainous island in the South Atlantic, which has no permanent residents, but an abundance of animals.

Lohrstorfer is a retired Kalamazoo librarian who moved to South Haven 20 years ago. She and her husband John are active disaster responders with the Red Cross. Martha has deployed 41 times all over the country, including Guam. When they are not traveling with the Red Cross, they enjoy adventures to not so well-known spots – like Antarctica.

"Journey to the End of the World" will be presented on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 1:00 pm. It is free and the public is invited. The location of this program will depend on the progress of the lift construction at Scott Club. If necessary, the program will be held at the First Congregational Church, 651 Phoenix Street, across the street from Scott Club. Check the Scott Club website or the Scott Club Facebook page for updated information on the location of this program.

With major refurbishment milestones achieved, Palisades advances toward restart

Holtec Palisades recently announced that it has successfully completed passivation of its primary system, which is an essential step to ensure long-term equipment reliability and a key milestone in the ongoing effort to return the plant to service.

To perform passivation, the Palisades team brought the primary system to normal operating temperature and pressure for the first time since the plant was shut down in 2022. Establishing and maintaining these conditions allowed precise control of water chemistry and restoration of the system's protective surfaces following extensive maintenance, inspection, and component upgrades completed over the past two years.

This work builds on significant restoration efforts across the primary system, including steam generator tube repairs, pressure boundary weld restorations, and a first-ever comprehensive system cleaning that significantly reduced dose rates in sensitive areas of the plant.

With passivation complete, the system will now be cooled and prepared for additional testing, equipment upgrades, and preparations for fuel loading. Additional activities underway include upgrades to the fuel handling system, switchyard restoration work, completion of required surveillances, and final closeout of major maintenance evolutions.

"The completion of primary system passivation reflects the diligence and technical rigor our team is bringing to position the plant for safe, reliable operation for decades," said Holtec International President Kelly Trice.

"Ensuring long-term safety and reliability remains the central focus of our restart mission, and we continue to execute this work with the care and precision it warrants."

Other recent accomplishments include completing more than 300 inspections of piping and welds, as well as reinstalling the main turbine generator.

In parallel with restart activities, Holtec is advancing plans for the future deployment of its Pioneer 1 and 2 SMR-300 units at the Palisades site in collaboration with global partners Hyundai and Mitsubishi Electric. The planned two-unit small modular reactor project is expected to provide an additional 680 megawatts of total electric output, complementing the more than 800 megawatts baseload output from the restarted Palisades plant.

In December 2025, the Pioneer project was selected for a $400 million U.S. Department of Energy matching grant to support its deployment. The grant will become effective after certain conditions are met, including the negotiation and execution of a funding agreement. In February 2026, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission accepted the first part of Holtec's Construction Permit Application for review. Early site preparation activities are also underway in accordance with approved permits.

The Pioneer 1 and 2 units are targeted for commissioning in the early 2030s, pending regulatory reviews and approvals. The Pioneer units are expected to be among the first SMRs commissioned in the United States.

AlleyKat Studio of Dance is reopening

By James Windell

Nobody knows exactly how many small businesses met their demise because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, a local victim of the pandemic was the AlleyKat Studio of Dance in Bangor.

When COVID-19 struck, the award-winning dance studio had been a thriving business since opening their doors in 2000. But the continued loss of students doomed their continued existence by 2024.

"After COVD came it was really hard to keep open," says Misty Jo Kovell, the owner of AlleyKat Studio of Dance. "Even with grants and incentives that were offered to business, I couldn't keep going. Before COVID I had 100 students, but that number dropped to 35."

The good news is that Kovell has decided to reopen AlleyKat Studio of Dance. The studio will be open for business beginning on April 13, 2026.

The studio will be offering a full range of dance classes for children starting at age seven and adults. "I will be starting jazz, tap, ballet, modern, acrobatic and adult fitness classes," Kovell says.

Kovell, known as Miss Misty to her students and "The Dancin' Girl" around town, has been dancing for almost 48 years – since she was two years of age. Her family moved to the Bangor area when Kovell was three.

When they first came to the area, her mother had difficulty finding a dance instructor for her. "It took my mom a minute to find a dance teacher who was on my level," Kovell recalls. "Instructors my mother contacted would say, 'She's too advanced, you need to take her to Grand Rapids or Kalamazoo to find a teacher." But an instructor was found and Kovell continued to progress as a dancer – even going to Mexico and Europe to perform when she was 12.

"I auditioned and was selected to be part of a dance troupe that travelled as goodwill ambassadors for the United States," she says. "I was like a little salesperson. I was selling my smile and selling dance moves to anyone who came to see us."

She performed as a dancer until she was 17.

After opening her own dance studio, she and her students won many trophies, ribbons, and awards, which she says are stored in a room in her husband's business.

"We went to World Dance Championships at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey in 2015 and 2017," she says. "In 2015, there were 68 competitive groups and we placed 11.th In 2017, when we went back, we did two dances and placed 7th and 10.th"

One of the awards she is most proud of is the Spotlight Award which she won for 15 straight years. "I'm proud of these awards because it is really important to me that my students don't just learn the art of dancing, but that they learn how to treat other people who are also doing the art. To me, it's about respect."

She adds that she has always wanted her students to be supportive to other dancers. "It takes a lot of nerve to get up on that competition stage and perform," she says.

While she has been teaching dance to adults at the Paw Paw Senior Center, she misses the competitive aspect of dance. "I'm ready to get back to helping students compete," she says.

But she's ready to take on students at all levels. "The people who should come to my classes are dancers – or people who like to dance or want to have some dance in their life. Everyone should experience a dance class."

She also says that her long-time associate, Kim Ralicki, will be offering adult cardio and fitness classes several mornings each week.

As a reopening special, Kovell is inviting all former alumni of her studio, including their children and grandchildren, to enjoy 30 days of free dance lessons.

AlleyKat Studio of Dance is located at 560 Railroad Street, Bangor. For more information or to sign up for a class, contact Misty Jo Kovell at 269-605-9497 or mojolem@outlook.com

Floral Design classes at VBDL Lawrence Community Branch Library

LAWRENCE - VBDL Lawrence Community Branch will offer three floral design classes at the library. Call (269) 674-3200 for information or to register.

April 28, 5:30 to 7p.m. Basic Vase Design – Create a beautiful vase arrangement to take home. No experience needed. We'll cover the basics of how to choose a vase, how to choose the best flowers for your project and how to keep your project looking great.

You'll leave with the skills to transform those grocery store flowers into something special.

May 26, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Elements and Principles of Floral Design - Elevate your floral designs! No prior knowledge of floral design is needed, just a love of flowers. The class consists of a discussion/ demonstration of how the elements and principles of floral design impact your floral arrangements and how simple changes can have a big impact. Leave with an understanding of how color, form, space, line, texture, balance, rhythm, proportion, harmony and contrast are used to create a professional looking arrangement.

There will be a drawing among participants for the demonstration arrangement at the end of class.

June 23, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Mechanics of Floral Design- Come explore some of the basic tools, materials and techniques used in floral design. Examples of floral foam, floral frogs, gridding and chicken wire will be displayed. After a discussion of these materials and techniques we will put our skills to use, creating a small floral arrangement with floral foam. Gain an understanding of how to create that "special" look with your arrangement using the right tools and materials and techniques. At the end of class, you will have a small floral creation to take home.

Hours for the Lawrence Community Branch Library, 212 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, are Monday – Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For information about this or any other program, call (269) 674-3200.

Van Buren District Library is headquartered in Decatur with branches in Bangor, Bloomingdale, Covert, Decatur, Gobles, Lawrence and Mattawan.

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VIEWPOINT

Rescues are an Easter weekend miracle

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

There are moments when a nation is reminded, in the clearest possible terms, who it is and who it chooses to be. The rescue of two American airmen from enemy territory is one of those moments. Not just because it was successful, but because of the very human stories behind it stories of grit, survival, and an unbreakable commitment to bring our people home.

The first airman's ordeal reads like something out of a movie, except it was all too real. After his aircraft went down deep in hostile territory, he didn't just sit and wait. Injured, disoriented, and alone, he began to move—climbing nearly 7,000 feet through unforgiving terrain to reach a position where he could be located and extracted. Think about that for a moment. At high altitude, every step is harder, every breath thinner. Add the constant threat of enemy forces, and it becomes almost unimaginable. Yet he kept going. That kind of determination isn't just training—it's sheer willpower. One has to call it an Easter miracle.

While he fought to survive on the ground, U.S. forces were working relentlessly overhead and behind the scenes. Intelligence teams tracked his movements. The CIA set up a counterintelligence operation to throw the Iranians off guard. Aircraft maintained watch. And when the moment came, rescue personnel moved in, navigating a dangerous environment to reach him and bring him out. It wasn't quick, and it wasn't easy—but they didn't stop until he was safe.

The second airman's story, while less prolonged, was no less important. Flying a separate aircraft, he also went down in enemy territory. But in his case, the response was immediate. Rescue forces were able to reach him quickly, securing and extracting him before the situation could escalate. It was a reminder of just how fast and effective these operations can be when everything aligns—training, timing, and execution.

Two very different scenarios. One airman enduring a grueling, hours-long fight for survival, climbing thousands of feet to stay alive and reachable. The other rescued almost immediately in a rapid-response operation. But both stories lead to the same outcome: Americans coming home.

And that's the point.

In a time when it's easy to focus on what's broken or divided, this is something that works and works remarkably well. It's a system, a culture, and a promise all rolled into one: no matter the circumstances, we go get our people.

These missions are not without risk. Every rescue puts more lives on the line. But that's exactly what makes them so meaningful. The willingness to take that risk, to launch into danger without hesitation, speaks volumes about who we are as a country.

It also sends a powerful message to every service member wearing the uniform: you are not alone. If the worst happens, your country will move heaven and earth to bring you back.

We should feel great about this rescue because it showcases the best of us not just the bravery of the airmen who survived, but the skill, coordination, and courage of those who brought them home.

Two different paths. One shared outcome. And a powerful reminder that, even in the most dangerous corners of the world, that promise still holds. For once we can throw away the division and come together as a nation with a source of pride. We are America, and most likely the only country in the world that could have made these rescues successfully.

Improper license plate leads to stolen vehicle recovery

Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Uniform Response stopped a vehicle for an improper plate in Keeler Township. The investigation found that the vehicle had been stolen from Benton Harbor. The driver, of Niles, was lodged for the vehicle and possession of methamphetamine. The passenger had a warrant and was lodged as well.

"Our Dive Team recovered a stolen vehicle out of our county which was stolen October 2025. The location was right off Wolf Lake Public Access. A Van Buren County Sheriff's Office sergeant received information from a friend fishing that there appeared to be a vehicle he marked on his Garmin Live Scope sonar from his fishing boat. The dive team dove the sight given and recovered the stolen vehicle," said Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a stolen scrap metal call in Almena Township. The suspects entered the property in the late hours and stole a large amount of scrap metal from an abandoned trailer being torn down. "Van Buren County Sheriff's deputies are working on identifying the three suspects who were caught on surveillance camera," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response took a runaway complaint in Geneva Township. "The 15-year-old male left and was believed to hang out with a girl in another county as there was no altercation or animosity in the house prior to him leaving. He did return home the next day," said Sheriff Abbott.

"Our Narcotics Unit got a TIP about a location of a parole absconder. They were able to locate the individual and arrest him on the parole absconding warrant. He was also wanted for an MDOP (malicious destruction of property) in which they lodged him for that as well," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a larceny of several walnut trees in Hartford Township. The owners of the property were out of town when the trees were cut down and removed. "A white truck was seen in the area about the time it occurred. Anyone with any information is asked to call our office," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation in Bloomingdale. "The deputy immediately noticed multiple empty beer cans on the floorboard and smelled intoxicants coming from the driver. An OWI (operating while intoxicated) investigation took place, and the driver was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol (third offense)," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a domestic violence incident in Paw Paw Township. The investigation found that the victim was stabbed (non-life threatening) by the suspect during the altercation. The suspect was lodged for the incident and the victim refused medical assistance at the scene.

Uniform Response handled an assault complaint in Hartford Township. "The investigation found that a love triangle was taking place and the two males involved with the female got into a physical altercation. The report was sent to the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office for review for charges," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the victim's leg in Arlington Township. "The investigation found that the victim was in a vehicle with the pistol handling it with his finger on the trigger, hence, it went off. The victim/suspect didn't have a CPL during the incident and should not have had it in the vehicle unsecured, loaded, and accessible," said Sheriff Abbott. The victim was transported to the hospital to be treated for the injury. A report was sent to the Van Buren County Prosecutor's Office for review and charges.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

NO AUTOCRATS, YES HIPPOCRITES

Dear Editor:

The recent "No Kings" gatherings are good reminders of how fortunate we are to be Americans with an always imperfect government that not only still functions, but it also provides the safety and inspiration for such so-called "organic" events. The irony is that attempts to compare today's arm chair dissent with the high risk dissent of 1776 are convincing proof that America at present is anything but a dictatorship.

When was the last time you saw handheld "No Supreme Leader" signs in Pyongyang or "No Czar" signs in Moscow? How many of the Iranians murdered this past January in Tehran BY THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT were carrying "No Ayatollah" signs? I have never seen pictures of an American flag being flown proudly in the Gaza Strip, but I saw too many Hamas flags being flown over tent encampments on universities across our state--to include one allowed outside of Haenicke Hall on the WMU campus--in 2024. How would an actual tyrannical king tolerate such displays?

The insulated folks recently protesting President Trump's sometimes brash--but necessary--attempts to repair the damage done by Biden and Obama ("I have a pen and I will use it!") all looked well-fed, well-clothed, well-shod and very safe. Speaking of well-shod, I wonder how many of the comfortable sneakers and boots worn by the pre-fab banner-waving No Kings protesters were made in China?

Perhaps if one is truly concerned about civil rights s/he/they [sic] might make better efforts to not provide resources for the worst of civil rights violators, the CCP. Stop buying Made in Communist China shoes, clothes, electronics, phones, toys and books manufactured by truly hard-done-by workers. The ultimate irony is that more than half of the Bibles sold in the US today have been printed in a country that will only allow its citizens to read its corrupted version of the Bible. Read the labels before buying, folks.

We witnessed fabricated and subsidized outrage by "mostly peaceful" rioters in 2020 after a heavily medicated--and sainted--George Floyd died while being restrained in Minneapolis. In 2025, in the same city, we saw violent dissent by more "organic" protestors who were attempting to prevent bona fide law enforcement from arresting illegal alien criminals. If the "No Kings" folks were honest, they should be carrying "No Fuehrer" signs to complement the unfair comparisons of their current targets to Hitler, Nazis, Fascists and Stormtroopers. If they were honest, they would take a deeper dive into history and see if Beer Hall Putsch, Krystalnacht, Reichstag Fire and Final Solution allow them to continue the ersatz parallels they are trying to make.

And yes, I am well-aware that January 6, 2021 was another "organic" demonstration which should never have happened, and I believe that many of the perps were guilty of, at the very least, trespass and vandalism. Sadly, however, unless all of the information about that dark day in our history is revealed, we will never know the full truth about it.

If only the energy generated by today's "Minutemen" who declare that "the fascists are coming!" could be channeled into the real injustices of voting irregularities, illegal immigrant crime, abortion and welfare fraud, then their protestations would be credible. Until then, may God continue to bless us by providing a haven where Life, Liberty and a Pursuit--NOT GUARANTEE--of Happiness allows even the misguided a platform to protest. Happy Bisesquicentennial Birthday America!! And many more……..

Jack Bley
Paw Paw

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Paw Paw lineman reflects on strong season

Tyler Kruizinga played three seasons of football at Paw Paw.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Tyler Kruizenga will always have a special place in his heart for the 2025-26 high school sports season.

For Kruizenga, his senior football year at Paw Paw was special. He played defensive tackle and offensive tackle and started both ways fora Wolves team which made the layoffs. In a 42-6 win over Vicksburg which ended the regular season for Kruizenga, he had three solo tackes, two assists one sack and a forced fumble. He was 6 feet 1 inch, 260 pound.

He was a second-year variety player. As a junior, he only started on offense.

"I definitely improved a lot from last year, I think," Kruizenga said. "I improved in confidence on what I was doing and I got a lot more aggressive compared to last year. My first year on varsity was a learning experience. This year I was more comfortable and aggressive."

Kruizenga felt he was equally effective on both sides of the ball.

"I do think I have the edge one the offensive line," he said "with the way our team likes to run its plays."

As a defensive lineman, I got off the ball pretty fast," Kruizenga said. "I also did good at holding my blocks and blocking in open spaces. We ran a lot of outside stuff this year."

The win over Vicksburg was impressive for the Red Wolves, Kruizenga said.

"I was good at sustain the block to allow other people to make plays," he said. "I had a lot of plays where I pretty much ran through the guy and made a few plays for losses."

He had a key fumble recovery in a close game against Big Rapids. And he got his first sack against Vicksburg.

"Overall it was a good season," he said. "I joined my first year when I was a sophomore. I had a lot of friends who also played."

Paw Paw senior caps off strong career

Austin Ackerman played football for Paw Paw but is now on the track team for the Wolves.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Senior Austin Ackerman enjoyed a sterling senior season for Paw Paw football last season.

He is now focusing on track.

He was offensive guard and defensive tackle and started both ways for his second straight football season.

Compared to a year ago, "I improved a lot," Ackerman said. "I never thought offense was my strongest suit."

But he got all-conference honors first team on offense and defense this season. He also was all-league last season.

As an offensive lineman, "I thinkmy speed was always my strength," Ackerman said.

He was a defensive tackle this season but said he can also played end. His strength and speed combined was a strength and "being able to blow offensive linemen back or getting around them," he said.

Ackerman said a strong game against Plainwell was a highlight.

Paw Paw started off 0-3, won six straight and lost its first playoff game.

"We kept working at it and got there," Ackerman said. "Our season was comparable to last year. We didn't have a 9-1 record this year but it doesn't mean our team was worse."

Ackerman is doing shot put and discus on the track team right now. He has been a point producer for the track squad.

Mattawan splits Saturday games

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — Mattawan's baseball team split with two teams on the road on April 4 in a doubleheader.

Mattawan is 2-2.

Novi won the first game 7-2 against Mattawan which won its second game against the Rochester Falcons 7-0.

Mattawan's win over Rochester was fueled on five runs in the fouurth inning.

Liam Walsh hit a sacrifice fly, scoring one run. Patrick Dougherty drew a walk, scoring one run. Patrick Dougherty had a walk, scoring a run and Nolan Jominy doubled home three runs.

Max Vanantwerp was the starting pitcher for Mattawan, allowing one hit and no runs over 4.1 innings, striking out six and walking one.

Nate Tandy opened the game for Rochester.

Nominee had two his and three RBIs for Mattawan. Patrick Dougherty and Jominey each stole multiple bases.

Shanley in 48th season with Lawton golf

By John Raffel

LAWTON —This will mark Barry Shanley's 48th season as Lawton as boys coach and he's hopeful it will be a good one.

Last season Lawton finished in the middle of the pack in our conference.

"We did have a player make the state finals... only to be broadsided and his car completely crushed. Kaedon Miller wiggled-out of the wreckage in time to get 9 holes in, but that was it for practice...and he was very sore trying to play golf... and averaged shooting 20 strokes over his average each day. He kept repeating "well, at least I'm alive."

Other top players were juniors and now are senior captains. Levi Brooks and Brody Camp.

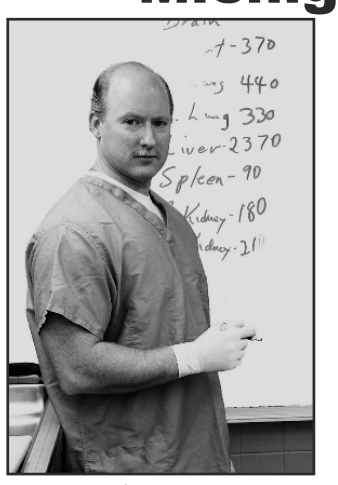
"This year Lawton is EXTREMELY young and inexperienced, but with 11 freshmen, all of whom are good natural athletes. I think we'll be a little raw in the beginning, but they will progress through the season."

Besides Levi and Brody "promising freshmen are Lucien Sweet Elijah Toledo, Adrien Topash,-Marco Garcia, Carter Fe, Wyatt McCorry and Ryder Brooks.

"We also have super promise in pre-high school players Joey Lewis, Brynn Yowell and Adalyn Earle. The cupboard is young, but very exciting to watch, with awesome work ethics and dedication and diligence.

"This is my 48th season as a head coach...and I'm so hopeful with this group, including returned players Kort Koster, Ben Kucinich and Hyden Markle."

Historical Association of South Haven features look inside Michigan's historic jails



Tobin T. Buhk

By James Windell

Tobin T. Buhk is a Michigan-based true crime author who has spent decades digging into the state's darker corners, including the history of its county jails.

Having just researched and written "Notorious Tales from Michigan's County Jails," Buhk's topic will be "The Clink: Inside Michigan's Historic Jails" when he speaks at the Historical Association of South Haven on April 21. His talk promises to be a guided tour through Michigan's ornate but forbidding jail structures, complete with archival photos and eerie anecdotes.

The program, based on his latest book, will blend archival research, historic photographs, and vivid storytelling to bring Michigan's old lockups – and the people who passed through them – to life. When Buhk talks about Michigan jails, he tells about historic county jails that often looked like elegant Victorian homes from the outside but hid cramped cellblocks within and he includes tales about colorful sheriffs and deputies – including Michigan's first female sheriffs and inventive lawmen with unusual methods. He also tells anecdotes about infamous inmates, such as alleged Capone triggerman Fred "Killer" Burke, who was once called the most dangerous man alive.

Then, too, Buhk doesn't neglect to tell stories about daring escapes, including a teenage robber who used a handful of pepper to slip away from Genesee County Jail, as well as mob violence and illegal hangings that scarred the histories of counties like Menominee, St. Clair, and Shiawassee.

A native of Grand Rapids, Tobin received his master's degree in English from Michigan State University and a master's degree in education from Western Michigan. His journey into true crime began in an unusual hands on way. To research his first book, Cause of Death, he volunteered for a year in a county morgue, gaining firsthand exposure to forensic processes and the realities of death investigation. This immersive experience shaped his writing style – factual, forensic, and deeply human.

While he specializes in historic true crime, often focusing on Michigan cases or unusual episodes from American criminal history, his bibliography includes more than 20 books, many of which have become staples for readers of regional crime history. Some of his notable titles include "Skeletons in the Closet: Stories from the County Morgue, "True Crime in the Civil War," "Poisoning the Pecks of Grand Rapids," and "Michigan's Strychnine Saint."

Buhk will be speaking at the Historical Association of South Haven, Hartman School Building, 355 Hubbard Street, South Haven, at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, April 21, 2026. The program is free and open to the public.

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=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

Almena Township
SYNOPSIS
February 18, 2026

Almena Township Board meeting was held February 18, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
Attendance: Scott Rueff, Kelly Redmond, John Wagner, Mark Roman, Tim Kloosterman Sandra Rickli, Joe Leduc.

a. Motion passed to approve amended agenda
b. Motion passed to approve meeting minutes of January 21, 2026
c. Disbursements approved in the amount of $42,777.57
d. Road Commission report
e. Mattawan Fire Department report
f. Public comment offered
g. Reports by officers presented
h. Motion to contribute to Van Buren Conservation District recycling program
i. Motion to approve Almena Township Cemetery Ordinance 103
j. Motion to name Kelly Redmond as the backup Paw Paw Fireboard meeting representative.
k. Meeting adjourned 7:19pm

Sandra Rickli, Clerk,
Almena Township

State of Michigan
Probate County of Van Buren
Notice to Creditors
IN THE MATTER OF THE MARY LOUISE COLEMAN TRUST DATE OF BIRTH: 05/09/1937

TO ALL CREDITORS: * NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Mary Louise Coleman died 02/18/2026
There is no personal representative of the decedent's estate to whom Letters of Authority have been issued.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the Trust will be forever barred unless presented to
Nancy A. Coleman Purifoy
Trustee of the Mary Louise Coleman Trust, under a Trust Agreement dated 10/10/2005, as amended, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

April 6, 2026

Attorney
Miller Johnson
Lauretta K. Murphy P41984
45 Ottawa Avenue, SW,
Suite 1100, PO Box 306 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501-0306
(616) 831-1700
Personal Representative
Nancy A. Coleman Purifoy
5408 Sycamore Court
Colleyville, Texas 76034
(817) 399-85851

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Linda Buell; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 4/9/2026; Atty File #: 26-003115; Insurer: GNMA
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on MAY 7, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Village of Mattawan, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot 3, Except the South 12 feet thereof, Block 1, Kinne's Addition to the Village of Mattawan, according to the recorded plat in Liber P of Plats, Page 163, Van Buren County Records.
57177 S Main St, Mattawan, Michigan 49071
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: April 9, 2026
File No. 26-003115
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400

(04-09)(04-30)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Violet Hesser; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: 26-000785-1; Insurer: (unknown)
SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on May 07, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Violet Hesser a/k/a Violet R. Hesser and Jack D. Hesser, wife and husband Original Mortgagee: The Huntington National Bank Date of mortgage: April 26, 2004 Recorded on May 5, 2004, Liber 1413, on Page 165, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: Thirty-Five Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty-Three and 77/100 Dollars ($35,723.77) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: Lot 53 of plat of Suburban Acres according to the recorded Plat thereof, Van Buren County Records. Commonly known as 20197 Meadow Dr, Gobles, MI 49055 The redemption period will be 12 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the above referenced property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. The Huntington National Bank Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 248.539.7400 1589321

(04-02)(04-23)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Robert Lee Smith; Atty: BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS - BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: 26-04850; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, on May 14, 2026. The amount due on the Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a Mortgage made by Robert Lee Smith to Rocket Mortgage, LLC, FKA Quicken Loans, LLC dated November 1, 2021 and recorded November 10, 2021 in Liber 1728 at Page 892, Van Buren County, Michigan. Said Mortgage is now held by Rocket Mortgage, LLC f/k/a Quicken Loans, LLC by assignment and/or merger. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of $88,628.72. Said premises are located in Van Buren County, Michigan and are described as: Tax Id Number(s): 80-02-023-012-50 Land situated in the Township of Antwerp in the County of Van Buren in the State of MI PART OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 23, TOWN 3 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, ANTWERP TOWNSHIP, VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN, DESCRIBED AS COMMENCING AT THE NORTH QUARTER POST OF SAID SECTION 23; THENCE SOUTH ALONG THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, 376.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED; THENCE CONTINUING SOUTH ALONG SAID NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE, 277.76 FEET; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES 21 MINUTES 30 SECONDS WEST, PARALLEL TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 788.09 FEET; THENCE NORTH PARALLEL TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, 60.25 FEET; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES 21 MINUTES 30 SECONDS WEST, PARALLEL TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 300.12 FEET TO THE WESTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF TERRITORIAL ROAD ALSO BEING THE EASTERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF THE PENN-CENTRAL RAILROAD; THENCE NORTH 44 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 52 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE, 300.00 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 376.00 FEET SOUTHERLY OF AND PARALLEL TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 89 DEGREES 21 MINUTES 03 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE, 879.13 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. BEING SUBJECT TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC IN THAT PART OF TERRITORIAL ROAD THAT LIES WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIPTION. NOTE: The Company is prohibited from insuring the area or quantity of the land. The Company does not represent that any acreage or footage calculations are correct. References to quantity are for identification purposes only. Commonly known as: 60441 26th St, Mattawan, MI 49071-9433 THE PROPERTY ADDRESS AND TAX PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER LISTED ARE PROVIDED SOLELY FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES. Said property is commonly known as 60441 26th St, Mattawan, MI 49071. The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages, if any, are limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Please be advised that any third party purchaser is responsible for preparing and recording the Sheriff's Deed. If this is a residential Mortgage, the following shall apply: ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT, AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. IF YOU: ARE A DEBTOR IN AN ACTIVE BANKRUPTCY CASE; ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A BANKRUPTCY STAY; OR, HAVE RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN BANKRUPTCY AND YOU HAVE NOT REAFFIRMED THE DEBT, THIS NOTICE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT FROM YOU PERSONALLY. Dated: March 30, 2026 Attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage: Thomas E. McDonald (P39312) Brock & Scott, PLLC 5431 Oleander Drive Wilmington, NC 28403 PHONE: (844) 856-6646 File No. 26-04850

(04-02)(04-23)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Christopher P Martin; Atty: Johnson, Blumberg, and Associates - Johnson, Blumberg, and Associates ; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: MI 26 7094; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in VAN BUREN County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 30, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Christopher P Martin and Tanya Martin, husband and wife, whose address is 15566 41st Street, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for AmeriFirst Financial Corporation, being a mortgage dated April 15, 2022, and recorded on April 25, 2022 in Liber 1737 Page 234, Van Buren County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, as assignee as documented by an assignment recorded in Van Buren County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-NINE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED NINETY-FOUR AND 49/100 DOLLARS ($129,194.49). Said premises are situated in the Township of Bloomingdale, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as: THE SOUTH 20 ACRES OF THE EAST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER, SECTION 21, TOWN 1 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST, EXCEPT BEGINNING AT THE SOUTH QUARTER POST OF SECTION 21, TOWN 1 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST, THENCE NORTH 54 RODS TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, THENCE WEST 165 FEET, THENCE SOUTH 290 FEET, THENCE EAST 165 FEET, THENCE NORTH 290 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. Street Address: 15566 41st Street, Bloomingdale, Michigan 49026 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: April 2, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490) Johnson, Blumberg & Associates LLC 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602 312.541.9710 - Phone 312.541.9711 - Fax File No.: MI 26 7094

(04-02)(04-23)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Gladis M. Kovarik; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 4/2/2026; Atty File #: 26-002958; Insurer: FHLMC
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on APRIL 30, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Frances M. Dee and Richard M. Dee, wife and husband and Arthur R. Kovarik and Gladis M. Kovarik, husband and wife, to National City Mortgage Services Co, Mortgagee, dated June 21, 2002 and recorded June 26, 2002 in Liber 1359, Page 543 and Loan Modification Agreement recorded on February 19, 2019, in Liber 1679, Page 727, Van Buren County Records, Michigan.
There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Twenty-Six Thousand Two Hundred One and 2/100 Dollars ($26,201.02).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on APRIL 30, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Bloomingdale, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
THE NORTH 128 FEET OF THE EAST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 11, TOWN 1 SOUTH, RANGE 14 WEST.
07010 37th St, Gobles, Michigan 49055
The redemption period shall be 12 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: April 2, 2026
File No. 26-002958
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400

(04-02)(04-23)

STATE OF MICHIGAN 36th CIRCUIT COURT – Van Buren County, 212 E. Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079; 269-657-8200. To: LEONIDES ALFONSO-PEREZ In Re: MARICELA ARENAS-AGUSTIN v. LEONIDES ALFONSO-PEREZ. Case No. 25-075219-DC. Take Notice: A Request for Default Entry was filed on December 18, 2025, requesting the clerk to enter the default of Defendant for failure to plead or otherwise defend as provided by law and stating that the Defendant is not an infant or incompetent person or in the military service. The clerk approved the default entry on December 18, 2025, stating that the default of the Defendant for failure to plead or otherwise defend is entered. A Motion for Entry of Default Judgment was then filed on February 11, 2026, requesting the court to grant Plaintiff sole legal and physical custody of the minor children of the parties, award Defendant no parenting time, and award child support accordingly. A hearing will be held on March 25, 2026, at 1:30 pm before a referee of the Friend of the Court in reference to the Motion for Entry of Default Judgment: Virtual Room A, Meeting ID: 292 853 1976. The result of a failure to answer or appear may be to bar or affect the person's interest in the matter.

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: ZACHARY T DEPIERRE; Atty: Potestivo & Associates - Potestivo & Associates; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 322007; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the Circuit Court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, on April 23, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): ZACHARY T. DEPIERRE, UNMARRIED MAN Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Ark-La-Tex Financial Services, LLC dba Benchmark Mortgage, its successors and assigns Foreclosing Assignee: PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC Date of Mortgage: October 5, 2018 Date of Mortgage Recording: October 10, 2018 Amount claimed due on mortgage on the date of notice: $144,919.88 Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in the Township of Antwerp, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as: LOT 23, TERRITORIAL CREEK ESTATES 2, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN LIBER 7 OF PLATS ON PAGE 31, VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS Commonly Known as: 22285 Wynsmythe Dr., Mattawan, MI 49071 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or upon the expiration of the notice required by MCL 600.3241a(c), whichever is later; or unless MCL 600.3240(16) applies. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, under MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention Purchaser: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee for any reason. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest, and the purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee, or the Mortgagee's attorney. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector. Date of notice: 03/26/2026 Potestivo & Associates, P.C. 251 Diversion Street, Rochester, MI 48307 248-853-4400 322007

(03-26)(04-16)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Roger Miller; Atty: Team X; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 525440F02; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 30, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Roger Miller, Married Man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Freedom Mortgage Corporation Date of Mortgage: June 2, 2023 Date of Mortgage Recording: June 16, 2023 Amount claimed due on date of notice: $195,202.77 Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Waverly, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Beginning at a point found by commencing at the East 1/4 post of Section 36, Town 2 South, Range 14 West, and running thence with bearings referenced to a survey recorded in Liber 1 of Surveys on Page 50, South 89 degrees 58 minutes 56 seconds West along the East and West 1/4 line of the East 1/2 of said Section 963.33 feet; thence South 00 degrees 19 minutes 43 seconds West 328.90 feet; thence South 54 degrees 10 minutes 48 seconds East 130.09 feet to the point of beginning of this description; thence South 33 degrees 54 minutes 11 seconds West 149.97 feet; thcncc South 54 degrees 10 minutes 48 seconds East 580.40 feet to the Westerly right of way of M-40 Highway; thence around a curve to the left with a radius of 2241.83 feet, along said Westerly right of way to the far end of a chord which bears North 33 degrees 54 minutes 11 seconds East 149.97 feet; thence North 54 degrees 10 minutes 48 seconds West 580.40 feet to beginning.
Common street address (if any): 46644 M 40, Paw Paw, MI 49079-8505
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1588204

(03-26)(04-16)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Frederick D. Cornelius; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 455668F06; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 23, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Frederick D. Cornelius, a married man, fee simple
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its individual capacity but solely as owner trustee for RCF 2 Acquisition Trust
Date of Mortgage: March 21, 2003
Date of Mortgage Recording: April 14, 2003
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $141,236.77
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Paw Paw, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The North 22 acres of the South 42 5/8 acres of the East 70.5 acres of the Northeast Quarter of Section 21, Town 3 South, Range 14 West, except the North 7 acres thereof.
Common street address (if any): 61398 40th St, Paw Paw, MI 49079-9753
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1588240

(03-26)(04-16)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Dale Kovach; Atty: Team H; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 528681F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 23, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:

Continues on page 9

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

Continues from page 8

Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Dale Kovach and Karen Kovach, husband and wife, as joint tenants
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC
Date of Mortgage: December 15, 2021
Date of Mortgage Recording: December 17, 2021
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $162,325.95
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Lawrence, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The South Half of Lots 7 and 8 in Block 9 in Original Plat of the Village of Lawrence, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber D of plats, page 600, Van Buren County Records.
Common street address (if any): 130 S Elizabeth St, Lawrence, MI 49064-9604
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: March 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1588285

(03-26)(04-16)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Palmer Dr., LLC VS Fred Mandel; Atty: ANR - ANR; 1st Pub: 3/26/2026; Atty File #: 25-075225-CH; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF ACTION AS TO ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVISEES, OR ASSIGNEES OF FRED MANDEL AKA FREDERIC MANDEL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that there is presently pending in the Van Buren County Circuit Court, State of Michigan, an action between Plaintiff Palmer Dr., LLC, and Defendants Any and All Unknown heirs, devisees and assignees of Fred Mandel aka Frederic Mandel; Case No. 25-075228-CH, involving the property identified as: Lots 69, 70, and 71. Palmer Beach, Paw Paw Township, Parcel No. 80-14-430-069-00. You are being sued by Plaintiff in an action brought pursuant to quiet title to the property. You must file your answer or take other action permitted by law in the Van Buren County Circuit Court, 212 E Paw Paw St, Paw Paw, MI 49079, within twenty-eight (28) days after the date of this notice. You may contact and serve a copy of any answer on Steven A. Jacobs, Schenk & Bruetsch, PLC, 211 W Fort St., Ste 1410, Detroit, MI 48226. Failure to answer within the time frame by law may result in a default judgment being entered against your interests in the Property.

(03-26)(04-09)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Andrew J Suarez; Atty: Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. - Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C.; 1st Pub: 3/19/2026; Atty File #: 25MI00512-1; Insurer: (unknown)
FORECLOSURE NOTICE
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, April 16, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Andrew J. Suarez, An Unmarried Man to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. as Mortgagee, as Nominee for Amerifirst Financial Corporation, its successors, and assigns, Mortgagee, dated July 5, 2022, and recorded on July 8, 2022, in Liber 1740, Page 522, Van Buren County Records, said mortgage was assigned to Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage dated July 25, 2025 and recorded December 09, 2025 in Liber 1787, Page 17, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Eighty-Eight and 01/100 ($149,088.01) including interest at the rate of 5.25000% per annum. Said premises are situated in the Township of PORTER, Van Buren County, Michigan, and are described as: Commencing at the Northwest corner of Section 19, Town 4 South, Range 13 West for the place of beginning; thence South 89 degrees 32 minutes 39 seconds East, 340.00 feet on the North line of said Section 19; thence South 00 degrees 40 minutes 15 seconds West, 530.00 feet; thence North 89 degrees 32 minutes 39 seconds West, 340.00 feet to the West line of said Section 19; thence North 00 degrees 39 minutes 43 seconds East, 512.87 feet on the West line of said Section 19 to the Northeast corner of Section 24, Town 4 South, Range 14 West; thence continuing North 00 degrees 56 minutes 25 seconds East, 17.13 feet to the Northwest corner of said Section 19 and the place of beginning Subject to an easement for ingress and egress, in common with others, over the Westerly 66 feet of the Northwest Fractional Quarter of Section 19, Town 4 South, Range 13 West. Commonly known as: 33681 COUNTY ROAD 352, DECATUR, MI 49045 If the property is eventually sold at foreclosure sale, the redemption period will be 6.00 months from the date of sale unless the property is abandoned or used for agricultural purposes. If the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241 and/or 600.3241a, the redemption period will be 30 days from the date of sale, or 15 days after statutory notice, whichever is later. If the property is presumed to be used for agricultural purposes prior to the date of the foreclosure sale pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the redemption period is 1 year. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, if the property is sold at a foreclosure sale, the borrower(s) will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages are, if any, limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Dated: March 19, 2026 Randall S. Miller & Associates, P.C. Attorneys for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC 43252 Woodward Avenue, Suite 180, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302, (248) 335-9200 Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Case No. 25MI00512-1

(03-19)(04-09)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
ANTWERP TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

The Antwerp Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to improve its commercial solar energy regulations (principal-use solar energy systems). Public comments on the matter are welcome.

- Chapter 2: Adds several new definitions related to principal-use solar energy systems and deletes several old definitions on the matter.
- Chapters 5-6: Revises the term "commercial solar energy system" to "principal-use solar energy systems" and revises a section reference.
- Chapter 9: Amends all regulations concerning commercial solar energy systems (principal-use solar energy systems), including purpose statement, application requirements, host agreement and fee, maximum lot coverage, glare and reflection, minimum setbacks, minimum separation, maximum height at full tilt, wiring, lighting, fencing, sound, screening, ground cover, land clearing, repowering, maintenance and repair, and abandonment and decommissioning.

Meeting and Hearing Information

- Location: Antwerp Township offices located at 24821 Front Street, Mattawan, MI 49071
- Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026
- Time: 6:30 PM
- Project Details: call (269) 668-2615
-

Those unable to attend the public hearing are invited to submit written comments to the attention of the Planning Commission Chair at the Township Hall address listed above by 4:00 PM on the meeting date. If any individual has a physical disability that may limit their participation in the hearing, please notify the Township at least five (5) days prior to the hearing so that reasonable accommodations may be made.

TOWNSHIP OF PINE GROVE
COUNTY OF VAN BUREN, STATE OF MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF ORDINANCE ADOPTION

To: The Residents and Property Owners of the Township of Pine Grove, Van Buren County, Michigan, and Any Other Interested Persons:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the following is a summary of Ordinance No. 12032025, which was adopted by the Pine Grove Township Board of Trustees on April 1, 2026. This Ordinance is effective 30 days after the date of publication.

ORDINANCE NO. 12032025
LITTER ORDINANCE

SECTION 1. NAME. The name of this Ordinance shall be the "Pine Grove Township Litter and Blight Ordinance."
SECTION 2. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Ordinance is to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare by prohibiting the accumulation of litter, junk, trash, rubbish, or refuse upon public or private property.
SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS. This Section provides the definitions of terms that are used throughout the Ordinance.
SECTION 4. REGULATIONS. This Section provides regulations for all of the following: prohibition on littering, dumping, and blight; outdoor storage and sale of various materials including garbage, scrap wood, building materials, inoperable vehicles, appliances compost piles; special hardship permits; prohibition and storage of personal use items; derelict structures and blight; and littering from vehicles. This Section also provides exemptions from its regulations.
SECTION 5. NUISANCE DECLARATION. This Section states that any violation of this Ordinance is a nuisance per se and provides enforcement remedies for the Township.
SECTION 6. SANCTIONS. Provides a table of fines for a violation of this Ordinance; states that each day a violation occurs is a separate offense and that any fine does not preclude the Township from obtaining additional relief in court.
SECTION 7. SERVICEABILITY. If any section of this Ordinance shall be declared invalid, the rest of the Ordinance shall not be affected by such a determination.
SECTION 8. REPEAL & SAVINGS CLAUSE. This Section provides that any ordinances that are in conflict with this Ordinance are repealed. Additionally, any judicial proceeding that has been commenced under any ordinance provision repealed by this Ordinance may be continued and enforced to their natural conclusion.
SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Section provides that the Ordinance shall take effect 30 days after publication following adoption.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a true copy of the Ordinance is on file in the Office of the Clerk of the Township of Pine Grove at the address set forth below and that a copy of the Ordinance may be inspected, reviewed or purchased by contacting the undersigned during regular business hours on regular working days.

PINE GROVE TOWNSHIP
Michelle Meert, Clerk
26520 County Road 388
Gobles, MI 49055
269-628-4380
www.pinegrovetownshipmi.gov

PAW PAW TOWNSHIP
114 N. Gremps Street, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE Public Accuracy Test for the May 5th, 2026, Special Election has been scheduled for Monday, April 13th, 2026 at 1:00 P.M. at the Township Hall at 114 N. Gremps Street, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079.

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to determine that the program and the computer being used to tabulate the results of the election, counts the votes in the manner prescribed by law.

Rebecca F. Payne, Township Clerk

ALMENA TOWNSHIP
27625 CR 375
PAW PAW MI 49079
269-668-6910
Almenatownship.org

PUBLIC NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Almena Township has scheduled the Public **Accuracy Test** for the May 5, 2026 Special Election for Monday, April 13,2026 at 1:00 p.m. at the Almena Township Hall located at 27625 CR 375 Paw Paw, MI 49079.

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the program and the computer being used to record and tabulate the votes cast at the election counts the votes in the manner prescribed by law.

Sandra B. Rickli
Almena Township Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE
TO PINE GROVE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN
that the Public Accuracy Test for the

MAY 5, 2026,
GOBLES SCHOOL ELECTION
has been scheduled for
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026
at 4:30 p.m., at the
Pine Grove Township Hall,
26520 CR 388, Gobles, MI. 49055

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate the Program and the computer that will be used to tabulate the results of the election, counts the votes in the manner prescribed by the law.
MICHELLE MEERT, Pine Grove Township Clerk

Arlington Township REVISED Regular Meeting Schedule Of the Planning Commission

52022 34th Avenue, Bangor MI 49013
269-427-7300

The Planning Commission has REVISED their regular meeting schedule for 2026.

All meetings will begin at 6:00pm on the following days and will take place at the Arlington Township Hall, 52022 34th Avenue, Bangor, MI.

May 14th – REVISED DATE (2nd Thursday of the month)
June 3rd – CANCELED
July 23rd – REVISED DATE (4th Thursday of the month)
August 6th – CANCELED
September 24th– REVISED DATE (4th Thursday of the month)

Meetings scheduled on 10/7, 11/4, and 12/2 will likely be changed or canceled.

This notice is posted in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended, (MCL 41.72a(2)(3)) and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Arlington Township Board of Trustees will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio recordings of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon a 5-day notice to the Arlington Township Board of Trustees. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Township Board by writing or calling:
Susan Wilson, Township Clerk, 269-427-7300

Township Clerk Signature: Susan Wilson

TOWNSHIP OF PORTER VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

PLANNING COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TO AMEND ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4.18 OF ZONING ORDINANCE
SIGNS AND OUTDOOR ADVERTISING STRUCTURES
and
TO ADOPT A CARGO, SHIPPING AND/OR STORAGE CONTAINER USAGE ORDINANCE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Porter Township Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at the Porter Township Hall, 88040 M-40 Hwy., Lawton, Michigan 49065 under the provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.
PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the public hearing to consider amending Article IV, Section 4.18 of Zoning Ordinance (Signs and Outdoor Advertising Structures) will take place at 6pm. The amendment will include:

1. Paragraph E. Add sub-paragraph 15
2. Paragraph P. Remove sub-paragraphs 5 and 7, re-word paragraph 8.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the public hearing to consider the adoption of a Cargo, Shipping and/or Storage Container Usage Ordinance will take place at 6:15pm. The proposed ordinance will define and regulate cargo, shipping and/or storage type containers and/or portable or temporary storage containers within the Township and to provide penalties for violation thereof. You are invited to attend this hearing. If you are unable to attend, written comments may be submitted in lieu of a personal appearance by writing to the Porter Township Hall, at 88040 M-40, Lawton, Michigan 49065, up to the date of the hearing.

Porter Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) days' notice to Porter Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Porter Township by writing or calling the Township at (269) 624-4022.

PORTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Doug Noble, Chair

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